

Becoming Whole by Maddie'sMind

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Summary: A little more than a year has passed since the disappearance Eleven. Nobody really knew what happened back then, and they don't really know now. But that is all about to change, and it all starts on October 25 1984, with a single mother, chief of police, a few confused teens, a group of scarred boys and one spectacular girl.

1. After the Storm

Author's Note: This is my first fanfic so bare with me, I will try my best to deliver quality content in a timely manner. I do not own the concept of Stranger Things or the Character's in the story, but simply am adding onto the ending. Critiques are welcome. Thank you and enjoy!

October 20th 1985

The thick air clung to her face, legs, and bits of skin exposed through the holes in her now faded and grimy pink dress. She was weaker and more delicate by the day, and had been for the past year, yet, by some miracle of the universe, she was still existing. Her heart, beating and her lungs still pulling air in and pushing air out of her hunger ridden body. But the world around her was an unforgiving place, full of monsters, toxins with different elements of this dimension congealed onto every surface. The chill never left the air and there was never a place to get dry. You could swear you saw mold growing on her feet if you looked at the child now. Her body was jagged, emaciated from weeks without food. The food in the mysterious box had served her well for a handful of months; but other monsters started to realize they could prey on her by waiting by it. She had been able to slip past them less and less as she got sicker and her powers grew less effective. It had been weeks since she had last been to the box and she felt the fire in her now bloated and starved belly. She had been trying to conserve her energy by laying in the blanket fort in Mike's basement, covering herself in the soggy blankets and occasionally mustering up enough energy to try and reach the other side with the boxy radio still here waiting for her. A couple times she could have sworn she had heard voices, their voices, exclamations of excitement. Or, at times she had heard an unfamiliar voice, of a lady, comforting, or stern. But she had only been able to do this a handful of times as her abilities were limited from weakness.

Her hair at first had started to grow out, but through lack of nourishment her body had to slow down and conserve itself to stay alive, most of the hair she had grown had fallen out. She was pale

and moving too much caused her pain. She didn't know what to do, but she knew she needed to get back to the other side. To where there was Mike and Eggos. She currently lay in the blanket fort, desperately trying to keep herself warm, even though it was a fruitless effort, and getting up to courage to make the trip to the gate, the gate that lead to the bad men, the men that she never wanted to see again. If only she had enough energy to make another one, somewhere else, she would. But at the moment as she started to doze into a restless state of sleep that was the least of her worries.

Things hadn't been quite the same on the other side either, the group of goofy and carefree preteens had changed quite a lot from the year before. While still playful, they didn't have as many moments of laughing to tears in Mike's basement or Castle Byers. Dustin and Lucas, the lesser affected, had grown more serious, less likely to take crap from people. Mike had turned from the leader that he had been before, to an inwardly troubled boy who was often moody and depressed. Will, well he was another story, he had PTSD, from his week in the Upside Down and was jumpy, constantly looking around and hated being in the dark, especially alone. He was less lively, more timid and was wakened nightly by terrors. But they understood each other, for all they had been through they supported and understood what they were all going through. They didn't usually talk about the happenings of the year before. Unless something of importance came up, then they all chipped in with their ideas and knowledge. But these instances were few and far between. Will had eventually disclosed the slug situation but made them promise not to tell the adults, or even Jonathan or Nancy. They still didn't know much about it seeing as it only happened once every few weeks. They had, however found the best way of killing the body invaders were to douse them in gasoline and burn the little suckers. It smelled horrible, but got the job done. They had started middle school which was going as well as could be expected. They were still the odd ones out, still pursued by Troy and his group of goons on the daily.

Nancy and Steve were still prosperous in their relationship going on a year now, and Steve could be seen in the Wheeler's living room with the family most nights, or down in the basement with Nancy and the rest of the boys. The siblings had started hanging out more after the events of last year, they had become closer. Jonathan hung out there

too, when he wasn't working that is, and was even friends with Steve, having gotten over the fight of last year. It wasn't a perfect world and there were still some tense moments but for the most part things were good.

As for the Wheeler parents, things had gone pretty much back to normal with Karen growing increasingly more annoyed with Ted's lack of caring. Holly was now in pre-school which gave Karen time to do more stuff for herself. She had a few friends in the neighborhood that would come over for dinners occasionally, sometimes the Wheelers would go over to other people's houses. She had noticed the change in her children though, as any parent would have, and just for the life of her couldn't deduct what the matter was with her concern of her's had lead her to seek the help of Joyce, who had explained Mike's attachment to the stranger girl from the year before that the government had shown them a picture of. Karen had never met this girl with the buzzed head, and was baffled that her son had grown so close to her, without his parents even being aware of her presence in the house.

When asked about the girl, Joyce felt a tightening in her chest, she didn't really know all that much about her, but she was sure that she had gone through some shit. It was the mother in her that yearned to be able to hold her little body again, to make sure that she was fine and to give her peace in the world. Cause she surely had not felt that the girl had had peace in her life at all. But it didn't do to dwell on things that could not be changed, she didn't know what had happened to the girl and to be honest, didn't really know where she had come from. She told Karen this when she enquired about her, telling her only things that she could remember. How the girl had been pale and never looked like she was comfortable. How she held herself tensely, ready to run at the slightest sign of danger. Karen had felt her heart go out to this child she had never met when she heard about the sadness in her eyes, and the way she whispered words at a time, not knowing how to make proper sentences. But what could she do, she never even seen the child let alone interacted with her. Plus she had 3 kids of her own at home, 4 if you counted Ted, which sometimes she did.

Of Course Joyce knew that Hopper knew more than he had said, to

her or to anybody. She often thought about getting the information out of him, but was always either too busy or too scared at what she might find out to ask. Not that she knew he would tell her, but they had grown closer in the past months since the demogorgon had been killed. As of right now, she couldn't really pinpoint what exactly they were, some nights they would hang out and drink beers in silence or with a quiet chatter, but then they wouldn't see each other for days.

Hopper himself was another story. He hadn't gotten over the small girl that sacrificed herself for a boy she had never met. He felt a pang of guilt in his stomach at the thought of how he had given up her place to that Dr. Brenner and his minions. He should have lied about her location, told them they were hiding her in the basement of the police station or something like that. Or that she had run south. But he hadn't, and she was gone now. Well not gone per say, she wasn't in this dimension, that was a fact; but she was in that other world. He had gotten worried if she was even still alive after almost every trip to the box in the woods to bring her food had him throwing out the food that was in there from the last time. She wasn't eating, and that was a bad sign. He thought about Sarah in these moments, how her appetite had gone toward the end. These quests were proving more and more taxing on his mental state and he would usually go home and pop a few pills before turning in for the night after giving the new food to the box. But there was a glimmer of hope that kept him going, that maybe she was still alive. He had seen what she had been through, and knew she was strong. However, over the past 5 or so months he had been losing that hope that she was still alive.

This is how life was for everyone, and it went on, slowly for some and faster for others, in the not so peaceful town of Hawkins Indiana. But that was all about to change, and none of them even saw it coming.

2. The Box

Oct. 25 1984

It was 10 am when she had called him, telling him about the box Will had found in the woods by their house. The box with food in it. *God, I knew this would happen at some point, why did it have to be so early though;* thought the chief of police as he drove over to the Byers residence where all three of the current members of the family were waiting for him to arrive. All Joyce had said on the phone was that Will had found a box in the woods with food in it, and that they didn't know who had put it there but they had speculations. Hopper wondered if they had any suspicion that it was him leaving the food, as it was. He hadn't told anyone however, and wished he had because it would be even harder for him to tell them now, that the food in the box was no longer being eaten. It would have been easier to explain that she was alive out there somewhere and eating the food he had been leaving earlier than it would be now; to tell them that he had been feeding her, but wasn't sure she was still alive. He sucked his last drag off his cigarette as he pulled into the driveway, an intense dread filling him. *Well, this is it, you know everything already, just go in there and tell them like it is.* This is what he was thinking to himself as he made his way up the dingy front steps and to the worn wooden door. Rapping his knuckles on the door he hears scuffling, footsteps and rushed voices coming within.

"Hop, come in come in." Joyce had the worried excited expression plastered across her face as she let him through and closed the door.

"What is going on here?" Hopper noticed that it was not just the Byer family in the house but the two Wheeler siblings as well as Dustin and Lucas. " Guess I'm late to the party." Hop exclaimed as he walked into the living area. Nobody laughed, it just wasn't that type of day.

"Just tell us what you know Hop, you, you told me you, knew about the box on the phone, w ..."

" Why is the box there? How did you find out about the box?" Mike chimed in, cutting Joyce off.

"Yeah, how do you know about th ..."

"Alright everyone calm down!" Hopper raised his voice, stopping Dustin clear in his track. God it was too early for this. " Alright everyone sit down, i'll tell you what's been going on. But NOBODY and I mean NOBODY interrupt me, let me talk until I am done. Do you understand?" The end of this phrase was pointed directly at the group of boys sitting across from him on the musty old couch. After a chorus of mhms and yes's from the group of youngsters, Hop took a deep breath, setting his hat on the table in front of him.

"It started after I left the hospital the night that we got Will back," his voice was low as he started. " I got pulled into the lab by a bunch of government people. They gave me everything they had on Eleven. Every file, every report, video footage, you name it they gave it to me. Told me to go home and look it over, come back to them in a few days." Hop was now getting to the hard part of this story, the part that he didn't like remember. It made him sick to think that these people could do something like this. " They came and got me a week later, told me that they knew Eleven was out there somewhere," This got the biggest reaction out of the group, and Lucas would have cut him off if Nancy hadn't stopped him. " They told me that they had given me all this information, so that I knew what they were dealing with, so that I would be on their side. They said that as of right then, they were going to leave her there, it was easier for them to let her die, then it was for them to try and get her out." He could feel a lump forming in his throat but pushed it back down. " However, if she was to make an appearance again, they wanted me to have the information so I could do the " right thing" and bring her back to them. So they could either continue with their work, or," he took a deep breath, "euthanize her." He had been staring at the ground this entire time. Not wanting to see anyone's face. The silence was deafening, and he was almost about to start talking again when Mike piped in.

" So she's alive? She's alive! Why didn't you say anything, why didn't you try to get her out. You said out right? Oh God, what if she is in the Upside Down. How come you didn't tell us?!" The boy was freaking out, and would have kept going if it hadn't been for Will stopping him to ask a question of his own.

"So, what does the box in the woods have anything to do with this?" Silence, you could have heard a pin drop. He looked up at Joyce through the bits of hair falling in his face.

"You were feeding her, weren't you?" Joyce made eye contact with him. " You have been putting food in the box for her since you found out she was still alive." He nodded.

"How do you know she has been taking it if she is on the other side though?" This time it was Jonathan, looking at Hopper, a wide eyed expression on his brow.

" I have been leaving food there every day since I found out." God this is where the hard part came in. " It was eaten, every day when I went back it would be gone, except ..." He took a deep breath. " except a handful months back, the food stopped disappearing all the time. It would only be gone once a week or once every 2 weeks. And, and." This part came out in something just above a whisper. " about 6 weeks ago the food stopped disappearing at all." Joyce looked like she was going to cry, Mike slumped over in his spot hands limp at his sides, staring at the ground. Hopper felt the color drain from his face, he didn't want to think about how long a kid could go without food and water, but he knew that even if she still was alive, she didn't have much more time left. He didn't even know how to get her out. He had been keeping an eye on the lab lately, he saw people moving around there, not many but enough that a very delicate plan would need to be made in order to have a successful mission. Plus, once he was in there he didn't know what he would do next. The people at the lab had told him the portal was still open, but weak ready to collapse at any moment. And besides even if he did get in there again, how would he know where she was.

"You got inside once, couldn't you try again?" This question was from Jonathan. Hop looked at the younger male, making eye contact for a second before starting to speak.

"That is too risky. The last time we went in there we got caught, they said that they wouldn't be so generous the next time around. Plus once we get inside, no telling how long it will take to find her."

" We can make a plan." It was Mike who spoke this time. "There are 8

of us, we we can figure something out." There was a certain desperation in the kids voice that made Hopper want to break down. " We have to do something, we have to. We just ... we have to." He sounded so determined. Hopper couldn't turn his back now.

"Okay." He couldn't believe he was saying this, " we will make a plan, but. But, we are not rushing anything. We will make it thorough and safe and there will be no loopholes in it. Is this understood?" There was a chorus of yeses and the excitement that was on the boys' faces was something that Hop hadden't seen there in a while. They looked elated, and Mike, for the first time in the last year, you could really see that spark in Mike's eyes again. Now he could only hope that they didn't get caught.